

23.

Position of Wires in the Display of the Twelve-wired
Bird of Paradise.

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(Text-figures 1-3).

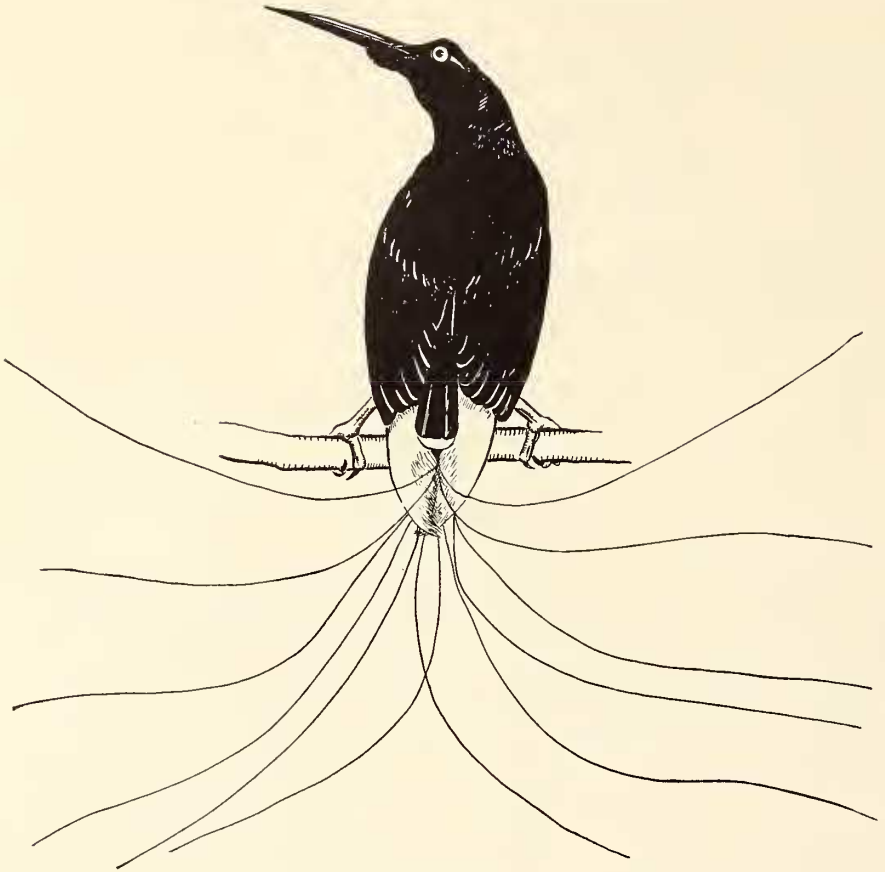
In a recent description¹ of the display of the Twelve-wired Bird of Paradise [*Seleucidides melanoleucus melanoleucus* (Daudin)], I made no mention of the position of the wires. This was because the wires of the bird under observation had become so worn and broken that they could not function normally. Since the time when the original notes were made (March, 1937), the bird has been through a complete molt and the wires are now perfect. It might be noted that this is a most unusual condition, since in most captive birds of this species, these appendages are broken off almost as soon as they develop.

The wires, which rise from the inner sides of the flank plumes, and appear to be specialized feathers of this group, emerge between the tips of the plumes, immediately beyond the end of the tail. Just after emergence, each curves sharply, six to the right and six to the left. The two inner wires, which are shorter and more delicate than the others, show less tendency to curve. When the bird is perching normally, the wires extend outward and slightly downward, apparently without strict regard to order.

In display, with the feathers of the abdomen tightly compressed and the flank plumes slightly expanded in the perpendicular plane, there appears to be muscular pull or tension, which causes the wires to rotate slightly. This rotation has the effect of bringing the wires into set alignment, the outer ones extending to right and left in the horizontal plane, at about the level of the bird's extended body, the curve causing a distinct forward tendency. This plan is carried out in the inner pairs, each extending outward, downward and forward, with the outward tendency decreasing in each pair as the center is approached. In the delicate central pair, the direction is almost entirely downward and forward. This leaves the twelve wires, approximately evenly spaced, extending forward, around and beneath the bird's body, none rising higher than its level.

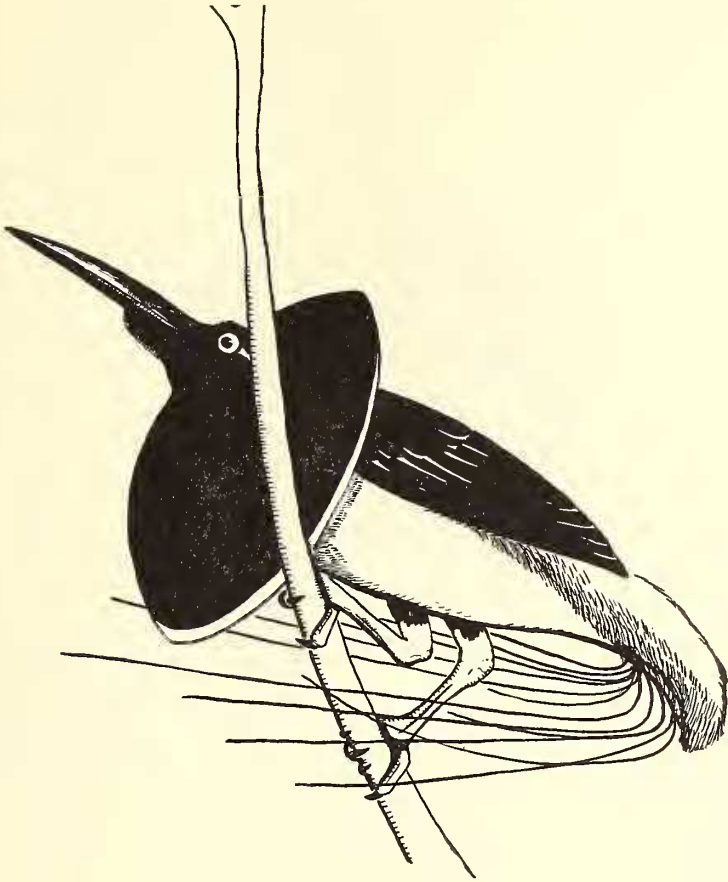
The three text-figures on the following pages represent the positions of the wires when the bird is at rest, and when displaying. The figures were drawn from life by Mr. Joel Stolper.

¹ *Zoologica*, Vol. XXII, Part 2, pp. 193-195, 1937.



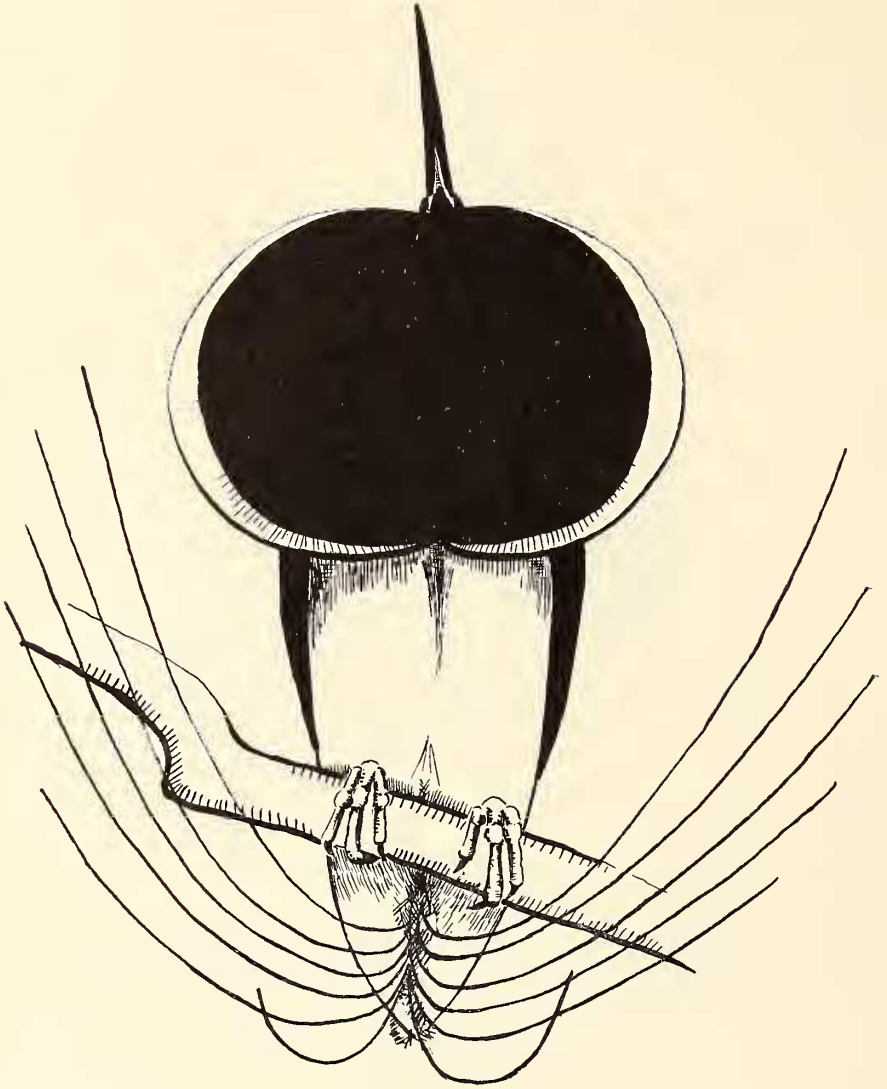
Text-figure 1.

Position of the wires of the Twelve-wired Bird of Paradise,
Seleucides melanoleucus melanoleucus, when the bird is at
rest.



Text-figure 2.

Position of the wires of the Twelve-wired Bird of Paradise, *Seleucidés melanoleucus melanoleucus*, in display. Side view.



Text-figure 3.

Position of the wires of the Twelve-wired Bird of Paradise, *Seleucides melanoleucus melanoleucus*, in display. Viewed from the front and below.